

CITY COUNCIL  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

A RESOLUTION BY:

02- R-0586

THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND LEGAL ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY ATTORNEY TO SETTLE THE CASE OF ODETTE FLORENCE V. THE CITY OF ATLANTA, PENDING IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA 1:99-cv-3169-ODE, BY PAYMENT OF THE SUM OF \$260,000 AND BY ENTERING INTO A CONSENT ORDER ALLOWING REINSTATEMENT OF ODETTE FLORENCE TO EMPLOYMENT WITH THE CITY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, on September 30, 1998, the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Operating Officer advised Commissioners and Department Heads responsible for the operational departments of the City of Atlanta that they would be required to submit their budget for 1999 with a permanent 18% reduction in funds allocation; and

WHEREAS, Odette Florence (hereinafter "Florence"), an employee of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs held a position which was proposed to be included in the list of the positions to be abolished by the "personnel paper" (Ordinance #99-O-0021) as a part of the efforts of said department to reduce its budgets pursuant to this directive; and

WHEREAS, the fact of the proposed abolition of Florence's' position became public knowledge in the hearings, work sessions and committee meetings which are part of the budget process; and

WHEREAS, Florence claimed that the abolition of her position was due to the fact that she spoke out on matters of "waste fraud and financial abuse" in the Campbell administration and that the real reason for his termination was her status as a "whistleblower," not for the purpose of reducing expenditures in the 1999 budget; and

WHEREAS, the City Council ultimately approved an amendment to Ordinance #99-O-0021, removing Florence's position and those of two other employees from the list of those to be abolished; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Campbell issued a line item veto of that part of Ordinance #99-O-0021 for the purpose of removing the amendment which deleted the abolition of the positions at issue, with the intention that this veto would allow the abolition of the positions, including the position of Florence; and

WHEREAS when the veto message was returned to the City Council, President Pitts ruled that the veto was "invalid" but the veto was not overridden by a vote of the Council; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Campbell wrote a letter to the City Council stating the President's ruling was not an override of his veto and that the 1999 budget would be put into effect without including the

positions subject to the veto and thereafter, the Bureau of Personnel and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs took action as if Florence's position was abolished and such action resulted in the termination of her employment with the City; and

WHEREAS, after the termination, Florence did file suit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia in Case Number 1:99-cv-3169-ODE, styled as *Florence v. the City of Atlanta, et al*, on certain claims arising under 42 U.S.C. § 1983; and

WHEREAS; ultimately in the summary judgment stage of the litigation, United States District Court Judge Orinda D. Evans ruled that the veto was not authorized by the City Charter, such that the case would proceed to trial on the "whistleblower" claims; and

WHEREAS, the causes of action alleged in the lawsuit arise under federal statutes which award statutorily determined damages to the prevailing plaintiff for back pay, and make possible the award of other damages, and provide for the automatic award of attorneys fees and costs to the prevailing party; and

WHEREAS, the parties have agreed on a method of settlement, which includes reinstatement of Odette Florence and a financial component, that the City Attorney has advised will settle the case in a manner that protects the best interests of the City.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

SECTION 1: That the City Attorney may consent to the entry of an order in the United States District Court which will cause Odette Florence to be reinstated as an employee in the unclassified service of the City of Atlanta with credit for service at her former grade and step from the date of her termination to through and including the date of the passage of this resolution and that the reinstatement be to the position of Recreation Program Coordinator in the Bureau of Recreation at the grade for that position and step as in Section 2 below;

SECTION 2: That the Commissioner of the Department of Personnel and Human Resources is authorized to adjust the entry step of the position of employment to which Florence is to be hired to effect her reinstatement to employment with the City consistent with the terms of the consent order;

SECTION 3: That the Commissioner of the Department of Personnel and Human Resources shall determine the length of service which Florence would have acquired as of the effective date of this resolution, had her termination not occurred and that this time be credited toward her length of service consistent with the terms of the consent order;

SECTION 4: That the Chief Financial Officer shall determine the amount of pension contribution plus any interest which Florence would have to repay to fully fund her portion of the pension contribution required of employees for the length of service as determined by the Commissioner of the Department of Personnel in Section 3 of this resolution;

SECTION 5: That the Chief Financial Officer is authorized to pay to the General Employees Pension Fund the amount described in Section 4 of this resolution for credit to the employee pension contribution of Odette Florence as though her termination had never occurred and is further authorized to fund and pay the City's portion of the pension contribution consistent with the time of service calculated in Section 3 of this resolution;

SECTION 6: That the Chief Financial Officer is authorized to pay by joint check to Odette Florence and Harry W. MacDougald, Esq. as attorney for Odette Florence a sum which is to be calculated by subtracting the amount determined in Section 4 of this resolution from the sum of two hundred, sixty thousand dollars (\$260,000) with said amount to be paid from FAC 1A01-529017-T31001 upon notice from the City Attorney that the necessary settlement agreement has been executed;

SECTION 7: That the City Attorney is authorized to enter into a settlement agreement, with Odette Florence and Harry W. MacDougald, Esq. as attorney for Odette Florence, which settles and releases any and all claims and causes of actions against the City arising from the termination of Odette Florence or accruing for any other reason regardless of whether such claims were alleged in the aforementioned lawsuit, provided that such settlement is consistent with the authority granted in this resolution and that no funds are expended in excess of those already authorized herein.

A true copy,

  
Municipal Clerk, CMC

ADOPTED by the Council  
APPROVED by the Mayor

APR 01, 2002  
APR 05, 2002

CONSENT I

		04/01/02 Council Meeting
ITEMS ADOPTED ON CONSENT AGENDA	ITEMS ADOPTED ON CONSENT AGENDA	ITEMS ADVERSE ON CONSENT AGENDA
1. 02-O-0562	34. 02-R-0486	63. 02-R-0514
2. 02-O-0564	35. 02-R-0511	64. 02-R-0515
3. 02-O-0566	36. 02-R-0587	65. 02-R-0516
4. 02-O-0568	37. 02-R-0492	66. 02-R-0517
5. 02-O-0582	38. 02-R-0493	67. 02-R-0536
6. 02-O-0389	39. 02-R-0557	68. 02-R-0537
7. 02-O-0392	40. 02-R-0521	69. 02-R-0538
8. 02-O-0390	41. 02-R-0522	70. 02-R-0539
9. 02-O-0458	42. 02-R-0523	71. 02-R-0540
10. 02-O-0394	43. 02-R-0524	72. 02-R-0541
11. 02-O-0397	44. 02-R-0525	73. 02-R-0542
12. 02-O-0399	45. 02-R-0526	74. 02-R-0543
13. 02-O-0400	46. 02-R-0527	75. 02-R-0544
14. 02-O-0401	47. 02-R-0528	76. 02-R-0545
15. 02-O-0402	48. 02-R-0529	77. 02-R-0546
16. 02-O-0403	49. 02-R-0530	78. 02-R-0547
17. 02-O-0404	50. 02-R-0567	79. 02-R-0548
18. 02-O-0405	51. 02-R-0588	80. 02-R-0549
19. 02-O-0408	52. 02-R-0518	81. 02-R-0550
20. 02-R-0464	53. 02-R-0556	82. 02-R-0551
21. 02-R-0494	54. 02-R-0558	83. 02-R-0552
22. 02-R-0495	55. 02-R-0585	84. 02-R-0553
23. 02-R-0496	56. 02-R-0586	85. 02-R-0554
24. 02-R-0500	57. 02-R-0349	86. 02-R-0555
25. 02-R-0560	58. 02-R-0506	
26. 02-R-0569	59. 02-R-0532	
27. 02-R-0570	60. 02-R-0533	
28. 02-R-0571	61. 02-R-0534	
29. 02-R-0572	62. 02-R-0535	
30. 02-R-0573		
31. 02-R-0574		
32. 02-R-0595		
33. 02-R-0596		

02-R-0586

(Do Not Write Above This Line)

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RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY  
ATTORNEY TO SETTLE THE CASE OF  
ODETTE FLORENCE V. CITY OF ATLANTA  
PENDING IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT  
COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF  
GEORGIA 1:99-CV-3169-ODE BY PAYMENT  
OF THE SUM OF \$250,000.00 AND BY  
ENTERING INTO A CONSENT ORDER  
ALLOWING REINSTATEMENT OF  
ODETTE FLORENCE TO EMPLOYMENT  
WITH THE CITY; AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES.

ADOPTED BY

APR 01 2002

COUNCIL

- ☐ CONSENT REFER
- ☐ REGULAR REPORT REFER
- ☐ ADVERTISE & REFER
- ☐ 1st ADOPT 2nd READ & REFER
- ☐ PERSONAL PAPER REFER

Date Referred

Referred To:

Date Referred

Referred To:

Date Referred

Referred To:

First Reading

Committee \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair \_\_\_\_\_  
Referred to \_\_\_\_\_

Committee \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair \_\_\_\_\_  
Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fav, Adv, Hold (see rev. side) \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Members \_\_\_\_\_  
Refer To \_\_\_\_\_

Committee \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair \_\_\_\_\_  
Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fav, Adv, Hold (see rev. side) \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Members \_\_\_\_\_  
Refer To \_\_\_\_\_

FINAL COUNCIL ACTION

☐ 2nd ☐ 1st & 2nd ☐ 3rd  
Readings  
☒ Consent ☐ V Vote ☒ RC Vote

CERTIFIED

APR 1 2002

*Clara H. Johnson*

CERTIFIED

APR 01 2002

*Randolph Johnson*  
MUNICIPAL CLERK

MAYOR'S ACTION

*Amley Smith*

APR 05 2002